

THE
Commonweal

Space Year I

Anniversary of the First Satellite

by **Charles M. Herzfeld**

Experiment in Monastic Life

Benedictines in Kerala

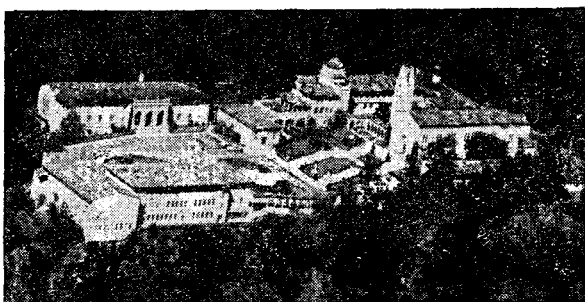
by **Bede Griffiths**

HENRY JAMES AS TRAVELER . . . by Anne Fremantle

AN AMERICAN BYSTANDER by Gerald Weales

AMUSING AND AMAZING by John P. Sisk

CLOAK AND DAGGER by William J. Smith



MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE

A fully accredited Catholic College for Women

12001 Chalon Road, Los Angeles 49
California

*Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph of
Carondelet*

Graduate School (co-educational)

Masters' degrees offered in Education, History
and Music

Undergraduate School

Bachelor of Arts with majors in Art, Drama,
English, Foreign Languages, Economics, Home
Economics, Mathematics, Music, Nursing,
Science and Social Sciences.

Bachelor of Science with majors in Nursing,
Mathematics, Medical Technology and Science.

Bachelor of Music with majors in Applied
Music, Theory and Composition, Music Edu-
cation and Church Music.

Credentials — General Elementary, General
Secondary and Special Secondary in Music.

Mount St. Mary's College is located on fifty-
six acres in the Santa Monica Mountains over-
looking Los Angeles and the Pacific.

Day and Resident Students.

Director of Admissions
MOUNT ST. MARY'S COLLEGE
12001 Chalon Road
Los Angeles 49, California

THIS WEEK

Week by Week	627
Catholics on Interracial Justice <i>by James O'Gara</i>	630
Space Year I <i>by Charles M. Herzfeld</i>	632
Experiment in Monastic Life <i>by Bede Griffiths</i>	634
The Screen <i>by Philip T. Hartung</i>	637
Communications	638
Books	639
Index to Volume LXVIII	643

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor

EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor

JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors

JAMES FINN

RICHARD HORCHLER

Contributing Editors

JOHN C. CORT

ANNE FREMANTLE

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post
office at Orange, Conn., under the act of
March 3, 1879. Printed in the U.S.A. and pub-
lished weekly at 440 Post Road, Orange,
Conn. by the Commonweal Publishing Co.,
Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N.Y.
Murray Hill 3-9685.

Copyright © 1958 The Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc.
U. S. and Canada, \$8 a year. Foreign, \$10. Single copies 25¢

THE Commonweal

A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

—week by week—

THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

IN SPITE OF the air of unreality, and even complacency, which has characterized much of the discussion of the off-shore islands, the situation in the Taiwan Straits remains critical. According to a coast-to-coast survey conducted by the *New York Times*, however, Americans across the country—the traditional “men in the street”—were reassured by President Eisenhower’s vigorous assertion of United States policy regarding the islands and saw little danger of war. And the President’s strong address won him the approval and support of many political commentators including some who have not always greeted his proposals with enthusiasm.

The picture of the United States which emerged from his talk was, indeed, impressive. Our Far Eastern policy, he asserted, was based on a desire for peace with honor, on a determination not to yield to aggressive armed force, and on a pledge of loyalty to our allies, particularly, in this case, to the Government of Free China. All of these were challenged, the President said, by the Communist attacks on Nationalist-held Quemoy. To yield in any way would be to follow a course of appeasement. We must therefore oppose the Communist aggression and defend the islands. “There are no easy choices available. It is misleading to imply that there are.” This defense and explanation of our actions in the Taiwan Straits strengthened the support already given to the Administration’s policy and won additional support.

But there are several points in the President’s address that are, to indulge in understatement, questionable. When, for example, he spoke of the islands of Quemoy and Matsu the President said that they “have always been a part of free China—never under Communist control.” This is, at least, an incomplete statement, for the islands have tradi-

tionally been controlled, not by Taiwan, but by the China mainland. It should be evident that Peiping is not going to give up or negotiate away such a strong claim to the islands.

And, giving a thumbnail history of events leading up to World War II, President Eisenhower invoked the term “Munich” to remind his listeners of the dangers and failures of appeasement. But there are too many essential differences between the situation of Czechoslovakia and that of Quemoy for the analogy to be readily accepted. There is, further, no evident reason to think that Communist China could, in spite of professed desires, readily take Taiwan because it had the islands. The defense of Taiwan is a far different thing from the defense of islands adjacent to the mainland. Furthermore, we are committed by treaty to a defense of Taiwan as we are not to the islands.

THIS SAME woolly blurring of facts was evident in the President’s easy dismissal of those who have questioned our defense of the islands. “Some misguided persons have said that Quemoy is nothing to get excited about. They said the same thing about South Korea—about Vietnam, about Lebanon.” Now what the President said may be true of some “misguided people,” but among the sharpest critics of present U.S. policy are many who urged resistance to Communist aggression in Korea and Berlin. President Eisenhower’s statements would have it that those who question our firm decision on the islands are appeasers. Such an implication cannot stand.

President Eisenhower further stated that “our armed forces . . . do stand ready to defend the principle that armed forces shall not be used for aggressive purposes. . . . If we are not ready to defend the principle then tragedy after tragedy would befall us.”

But this overlooks recent facts of history: Hungary is there to remind us that non-intervention even when faced with the most evident brutality may be the cost of avoiding the devastation of another world war. In any military commitment we must judge whether the risk is worth the gain, and on this point the President was not convincing.

The President's address is ultimately unsatisfactory, therefore, not because he pointed out—that there are no easy choices, but because he implied that there were really no choices. But there *are* choices, though they steadily diminish under the pressure of our foreign policy and the increasing strength of Communist China.

In the Taiwan Straits the choices of our action turn, to a large degree, upon our judgment of the islands themselves. Are they of strategic importance or symbolic importance—or, possibly, both? Are they defensible or, as some critics assert, a military millstone? Are they worth the possibility of a major conflict? As resistance builds up, of course, some of these questions are rendered academic. Once we are thoroughly committed, "what might have been exists," as T. S. Eliot wrote, "only in a world of perpetual speculation." It is unfortunate that our present policy, so forcefully reiterated by the President, tends to stifle proper criticism, to seal off significant issues, to leave unanswered crucial questions.

CONVALESCENCE

THE FACT THAT financial observers are asking whether Washington's rather abrupt shift from a loose- to a tight-credit policy will not check various forces making for recovery is one index of the nation's economic health. The policy of making it more difficult to borrow is intended to head off inflation, but the fear is that it may also result in discouraging renewed business activity. The Eisenhower Administration's anti-recession efforts have all along tended to lean heavily on credit and monetary mechanisms to provide employment, rather than such means as lower taxes or large-scale public works. Now that Arthur F. Burns and Gabriel Hauge have ceased to serve as economic advisers, the tendency to influence the economy through banking methods is heightened.

A leading factor is the predicted national deficit of twelve billion dollars for the coming fiscal year. Its tie-ins with the state of American business are several. A deficit of such proportions has an appreciable inflationary effect. For heads of families

considering major purchases and for business management it raises such specters as difficulties in borrowing, higher taxes and even price controls. It discourages the sales of durable goods and new investment in productive plant essential for any full-fledged and sustained national recovery.

One does not have to hold office in our present "businessman's Administration" to be startled at a deficit of such proportions. What can be done to reduce it? This hardly seems the time greatly to curtail appropriations for national defense. Certain projected increases in expenditures go back directly to emergency anti-recession measures, among them the now-expired government mortgage-buying program and the higher mail subsidies to hard-pressed railroads. Record crops will materially increase the outgo for government crop supports under the present system.

On the income side the expected deficit reflects the ravages of the recession on tax revenues derived from business profits and personal income. The inter-relatedness among all these factors is undeniable. The strain of meeting worldwide defense commitments exerts constant pressure. The problems of Secretary Anderson and his associates in providing the sinews of defense, spurring recovery, defending the dollar and making ends come closer to meeting add up to an unenviable task.

WHERE THE HEART IS

GENERALISSIMO Rafael Trujillo, strong man of the Dominican Republic, has been receiving a bad press these days, both north and south of the border. The United States government continues to give monetary and moral support to the dictatorial Trujillo regime, it is true, but public opinion here is becoming increasingly harsh in its judgment of the Generalissimo and the police-state he maintains.

There are still some Americans, however, who have not wavered in their admiration for the Caribbean dictator. Two of his fans from Washington, D.C., for instance, recently addressed the legislature of the Dominican Republic and went on record with declarations like these: "Thank God for your country and for your leadership for freedom, for capitalism, and for free enterprise. . . ." "You lead for freedom; you lead for honor; you lead for religion; and thank God you lead for common sense. . . ." "I can appreciate how happy and how lucky you have been with Generalissimo. . . ." "I say, God bless you and God bless your leader, and

God bless this country. May you increase and may your example be followed."

The first two of these tributes came from Senator James O. Eastland (D.-Miss.), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Internal Security Subcommittee. The last two are from Senator William E. Jenner (R.-Ind.), ranking Republican on both committees. When they are not praising dictators, Senators Eastland and Jenner spend their time denouncing, not necessarily in this order, Communism, foreign aid, liberals, the Supreme Court, integration, etc. What they believe in, as they have so often proclaimed, is good old-fashioned one hundred per cent "Americanism." Now we're getting an inkling of what they mean—Americanism like the kind they have in the Dominican Republic.

TO BE CONTINUED

AS EXPECTED, the Supreme Court has decreed that desegregation of the schools must proceed as originally planned, in Little Rock and, by extension, in the rest of the South. Also as expected, the Court's decision has been met by "massive resistance"—state orders closing the schools scheduled for integration both in Little Rock and in Warren County, Virginia. Thus local school boards and parents find themselves caught, in the words of Little Rock School Superintendent Virgil T. Blossom, in "a battle between two sovereignties."

Despite dark mutterings about "troops and bayonets," prominent in the comments of leading segregationist spokesmen, the battle now seems likely to be merely a legal one, albeit long and bitterly fought. The constitutionality of public school closure has already been challenged in the state courts of Arkansas and Virginia, and it appears that the issue will be contested through labyrinths of previously untested statutes and interpretations.

This is not a cheerful prospect. We are confident, however, that segregation will one day be no more, even though its death throes bring suffering to everyone involved—the white and Negro children, their parents, their neighbors in the South, and every citizen of the United States.

THE CHURCH IN CHINA

WE HAVE commented before on the plight of the Church under the Chinese Communist regime, most recently in an editorial in the August

22nd issue in which we described the government-sponsored drive to establish a "National Church" cut off from Rome. Now the text of an encyclical letter from the Pope to the three and one-half million Chinese Catholics has been released; it was sent on June 29, but it had been kept secret in an effort to prevent interference with its distribution by the Chinese government.

Pope Pius encouraged Chinese Catholics to stand fast in their Faith and announced that those Roman Catholic bishops in China who are reported to be consecrating new bishops without authority from Rome are "excommunicated in a very specially reserved manner," as are any priests who accept valid but illicit consecration at their hands. So far, no information is available as to how the Pope's message was received in China, nor, indeed, as to how widely Catholics faithful to Rome were able to make it known.

DEMOCRATIC SWEEP?

WHAT DO YOU say about the fact that the Democrats scored their greatest triumph in modern history in the recent elections in Maine? It all depends on your point of view.

If you are President Eisenhower, you say: "The Republican Party did take a beating and there is no use disguising it." If you are Paul Butler, national chairman of the Democratic Party, you say that the people of Maine voted against "drift and indecision" in the Eisenhower Administration. If you are Meade Alcorn, national chairman of the G.O.P., you concede that the "Republicans took a beating—a bad beating," but you play down the results as "obviously another personal victory for Muskie." If you are the Republican state chairman in New York, you see the results as a "personal victory for a vigorous, young public figure" and hence an obvious guarantee that young and vigorous Nelson Rockefeller will unseat Democratic Governor Harriman this fall. If you are Roscoe Drummond in the N.Y. *Herald Tribune*, you see the results in Maine as confirmation of a rising trend to the Democrats. If you are David Lawrence in the same paper, you see the outcome as an indication of the power of the labor unions. And if you are a Republican chairman anywhere else at all, you bombard the White House with frantic messages for President Eisenhower, all saying "Adams must go!"

In politics, as Mr. Dooley probably never said, "you pays your money and takes your choice."

Catholics on Interracial Justice

THE SUBJECT of interracial justice has been discussed in countless Catholic gatherings over the years, but for some reason or other there had never been a national Catholic convention devoted exclusively to this subject. This year the two oldest Catholic Interracial Councils in the country, New York and Chicago, decided to remedy this omission. The result was the first National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice, which took place in Chicago on the last three days of August.

Present for the meeting were representatives of Catholic Interracial Councils from all over the country; leaders of other Catholic organizations; individual Catholics—priests, brothers, nuns and laymen—who were simply interested in interracial justice; and Protestant and Jewish experts in race relations. In all, there were some four hundred participants, gathered from forty states, including a dozen in the South.

All sessions of the Conference except the final banquet took place on the adjoining campuses of Loyola University and Mundelein College. The weather was Chicago at its worst, hot and humid; Roman collars and ties melted away very quickly, and only the nuns managed to maintain their usual air of cool imperturbability. Heat or no, though, it was a hard-working conference. The day began with Mass at eight o'clock and the meetings went all day, up to and including after-dinner sessions which did not end until ten or later.

While the Conference was in session, the Chicago papers were carrying front-page stories on the newest developments in the Little Rock crisis. Almost as if in reply, Father William J. Kenealy, S.J., of the Law School at Loyola University in New Orleans, early in the meeting restated the teaching of the Church on this basic question of race.

"The fundamental principle of the essential equality and dignity of every human being, and the essential unity of the entire human race, has been sanctified by the sacrifice of Calvary, illumined by the dawn of Easter, emblazoned by the fires of Pentecost, and heralded to the corners of the earth by the voice of Catholicism—proclaiming our common origin in the First Adam, our common redemption by the Second Adam, and our common sanctification in the Mystical

Body of Christ," Father Kenealy said. "Popes, archbishops, bishops, dogmatic and moral theologians, the unanimous judgment of the teaching Church is that compulsory segregation is objectively and morally wrong. It is a cancer in the body politic. It is a desecration of Christian civilization. . . . In the eyes of God there is neither white nor black nor red nor yellow nor brown; neither Jew nor Gentile nor Barbarian nor Cythian, but all are brothers in Christ Jesus. 'By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one for another.'"

It was in this spirit that the delegates to the National Conference went about their work. In the course of the proceedings delegates discussed a variety of topics, far too many even to be listed here; subjects like these were typical: "The South Today"; "A Christian Conscience and Interracial Justice"; "Effective Race Relations—Methods and Techniques." And the participants listened to many good speakers, again too many for more than a sampling: the great Father John LaFarge, S.J., founder of the first Catholic Interracial Council a quarter of a century ago; the well-loved Monsignor Daniel M. Cantwell, chaplain of the Chicago Council and also of Friendship House, the Catholic Council on Working Life, and the Adult Education Centers of Chicago; George K. Hunton, the distinguished executive secretary of the New York Council; Orville L. Freeman, the young and vigorous Governor of Minnesota; Robert Sargent Shriver, Jr., personable president of the Catholic Interracial Council in Chicago; John Yancey of the A.F.L.-C.I.O., long a tireless worker in the Catholic interracial field; the Most Reverend Raymond P. Hillinger, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, who passed on to the delegates "warm commendation for the praiseworthy work of the Catholic Interracial Councils" from Pope Pius, and himself endorsed the work of the delegates most strongly, declaring bluntly that those who refuse to accept the Catholic teaching on the equality of the races "simply are not Catholic, and there are no two ways about it."

WHAT WAS the temper of the Conference? If I read the sentiments of the participants correctly, most of them are tired of being told that they must not expect "too much, too soon,"

that they must be "patient." Father LaFarge reflected this point of view, I think, when he expressed his sorrow over the passing of the Catholic Committee of the South and when he said, in another connection: "Caution and patience are basic virtues, but exhortations to prolonged inaction are meaningless if they are used, as is not infrequently the case, as a mere excuse for doing nothing. . . . Many of the worst interracial situations that exist today would not have come to pass if such reasonably prompt action had been exerted a couple of decades ago."

As for Negroes themselves, I think Father LaFarge was again expressing the common sentiment of those present when he said: "We can welcome the phenomenal patience shown by so many of the American Negro people under great trial and provocation, and honor the remarkably capable and intelligent program of a leader like Dr. Martin Luther King."

This impatience with those who say interracial questions will solve themselves if only they are ignored ran through the entire proceeding. It was certainly obvious in the sharply worded resolution on integration in the schools which was adopted by the delegates in the closing session of the Conference.

"The clear decision of the Supreme Court holding segregation in the schools to be unconstitutional should not be clouded by any reluctance in the executive branch or by any unwillingness in Congress to give support to the moral principles upon which the decision was based," the resolution read. "At this critical time in world history the people of the United States have a right to expect their chief executive to use the full moral authority of his office to secure full equality for all citizens in all parts of our nation. There is no justification for the chief executive to commit to an uncertain future the implementation of the decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States or the enforcement of our federal civil rights law."

If the Conference was critical of Washington, it was not prepared to be smug about Catholic efforts. "As Catholics and as Americans," another resolution read, "we acknowledge in a humble and contrite spirit our many individual and collective failures to implement fully the principles of Christian social justice and American democracy in regard to race relations. We ask Almighty God for the special grace to enable us to give courageous witness to our Catholic faith in this vital area of the social order."

An important part of the proceedings at the Conference was the work of four commissions which had been set up to concentrate on specific

problem areas. The same spirit of self-criticism showed up strongly in the proceedings of these commissions, although many of their recommendations were startling precisely because they should have been unnecessary. Some examples from the Commission on Parochial Life and Institutions:

Every Catholic parish should be an "open parish" devoted to the common temporal and spiritual good of all within its boundaries. Every parish should provide instruction in the principles of interracial justice, not as an extraordinary measure, but as a matter-of-fact fulfillment of a pastor's duty to instruct all in their moral obligations. The fact that some Catholic hospitals still practice "policies of racial exclusion or segregation" is nothing less than "scandalous." No Catholic organization can permit the exclusion of any Catholic from membership on the basis of race or national origin. Catholic priests and laymen should make it a practice to extend a special welcome to members of minority groups who move into the parish.

IN HIS KEYNOTE address on the first day, Father LaFarge asked: "What is the purpose of the conference we are engaged in during these three days?" Then, answering his own question, he said: "We meet here primarily in order to make a great affirmation, drawn from our Christian faith."

That affirmation was made, certainly, in the Chicago meeting. Nonetheless, the delegates to this first National Conference were not content, and one of their last acts was to set up an interim committee, of which Father LaFarge is honorary chairman, with two main purposes: to explore ways and means of making the work of existing Catholic Interracial Councils more effective and to aid in the establishment of new Councils; secondly, to study the possibility of establishing a nationwide federation of Catholic Interracial Councils working in close and continuing cooperation.

This step was not taken without considerable discussion. Not all of the delegates, I gather, are convinced of the wisdom or practicality of a nationwide federation of Catholic Interracial Councils. But there is no disagreement among them on the need to give new life to many existing Councils and to create new ones. Today there are thirty-six Catholic Interracial Councils in the United States—or about one to every million Catholics. The interim committee's goal is fifty Councils. Under the circumstances, this hardly seems an excessive ambition.

JAMES O'GARA.

Space Year I

*On the anniversary of the launching of
the first satellite, we must try to assess
the meaning of man's first steps into space*

by CHARLES M. HERZFELD

THE WHOLE WORLD was electrified on October 4, 1957, by the announcement that Soviet Russia had put the first man-made satellite into orbit. The Space Age had begun, not quite fifteen years after the beginning of the Atomic Age, and another giant step in man's mastery of nature had been taken. The Russian announcement was not a complete surprise, as U. S. and U.S.S.R. plans to launch a variety of instrumented satellites and space probes during the International Geophysical Year had been well advertised. But the early success of the Russians and the size of their satellites astonished everyone.

A year has passed since then, seven satellites have traveled around the earth, and we must try to assess the meaning of man's first steps into space. It is rather difficult to comprehend the vast significance of what is taking place. Perhaps the discovery of the New World in the fifteenth century offers an analogy, but its full force is lost on us because we take that discovery and all its consequences so completely for granted.

The impact of the developments of the last year can be found most clearly in three areas: science, technology, and the cold war. But beyond these a more subtle influence can be observed on the spiritual level, and the effects on this will surely be the most significant in the long run.

The impact of the earth satellites on technology and the cold war are closely related. The large guided and ballistic missiles which play such a critical role in the cold war are also the tools used to launch the satellites. Thus the satellite programs have given added incentive to the expansion of the new rocket and missile industry. The development of special rocket engines, new fuels and special guidance systems is required, and because of the complexity of satellite and missile systems,

Mr. Herzfeld is a professor of physics who writes frequently on scientific questions.

this demand affects large sectors of the aircraft, chemical, and electronics industries.

The cold war itself has been affected in two notable ways. First, the launching of the satellites has given an indication of the relative missile capabilities of Russia and the U. S. The relative weights of the satellites, nearly three thousand pounds for the largest Russian and thirty-eight pounds for the largest U. S. entry, speak volumes to the expert. They prove that the Russians have operational missiles with many times the power and range of ours, and furthermore that they are willing and able to sacrifice these missiles in satellite launchings. Were the American press accurately informed and sufficiently concerned about the military significance of these two numbers, the subject would stay on the front pages of the newspapers for a long time. However, attempts to belittle the importance of the difference of nearly a hundred-fold are succeeding so well that it is almost bad taste to discuss the matter in public. The basic reasons for the difference are complex, and it will take some time for the U. S. to close the gap. In the meantime matters are likely to get worse before they get better.

The second impact of the satellites on the cold war occurred in the field of propaganda. Here the U. S. has been made to look like a second-rate power to the whole world, and enormous damage has been done to its prestige. To have overlooked this aspect of the satellite program was a psychological miscalculation of the first order. Only spectacular American achievements will allow us now to recapture the initiative.

CONTRARY TO early popular fears, satellites cannot be used as launching platforms for missiles. But it is quite possible that some years from now satellites will be important observation and reconnaissance

tools, and they may play a considerable role in any international observation schemes for controlling tests of A-bombs and large missiles.

It is in basic research, particularly in astrophysics, geophysics and physical cosmology, that the satellites have so far made the most significant contribution. For the first time scientific observations are being taken *outside* the earth's atmosphere. Earlier rocket probes brought back valuable information, but the short duration of these "shots" limited their usefulness. Now we can obtain data from space platforms for weeks and months without interruption.

What are some of the outstanding discoveries made so far? Among the first new results were reliable data on the density of the atmosphere at various altitudes, especially above two hundred miles, where rocket data were scant. It was clear after a few weeks of satellite observations that the atmosphere above two hundred miles altitude was much denser than previously expected. This finding will enable us to revise ideas about the dynamics of the atmosphere, related to meteorology, and about the density of gas in the solar system. Much is also being learned about dust in space. Fine dust particles, micrometeorites, fall into the atmosphere at a high rate, and some satellites are equipped with abrasion gauges which measure this rate. Once we know how much gas and dust exist throughout the solar system, we will understand better how stars such as the sun are formed, and we shall be able to check a current theory which proposes that stars grow by accretion of gas and dust in space.

Another phase of research deals with radiation in outer space. The sun emits a great deal of ultra-violet light, which is, fortunately for us, absorbed by the atmosphere. The satellites measure the amounts emitted, and thus provide new data which increase our understanding of the constitution of the sun. The sun is a "main sequence" star of average size and luminosity, hence such increased understanding will give us insight about a large fraction of the stars in the universe. Cosmic rays, consisting mainly of particles of very high energy, bombard the earth constantly. In fact, they are the chief source of naturally occurring radiation on earth. We do not know their origin. Satellites carry instruments to determine the nature and intensity of these rays.

Recently, intense cosmic rays have been found above two hundred fifty miles. This radiation is so intense that it may kill humans exposed for a few hours. It is possible that Laika, the dog in Sputnik II, died of exposure to this radiation, and it is now clear that some protection or perhaps some evasive action will be needed for human passengers in space-ships. The whole extent of this radiation belt is not yet known, and many more satellites and space probes will have to be sent up before the picture becomes clear.

RELATED to the radiation question are the electrical properties of the earth's atmosphere. The sun's radiation ionizes large regions of the upper atmosphere, i.e., it breaks up the atoms and molecules of the atmosphere and removes electrons from them, leaving the fragments electrically charged. These regions, called the ionosphere, reflect radiowaves like a mirror, but they are transparent to radar and television waves. Irregular changes in these regions produce "fading" of radio signals and other disturbances of radio transmission. Because satellites provide known sources of radio waves *outside* of the ionosphere, they give much information of significance both to basic physics researchers and, on the practical level, to the communications industry.

The first "moon shot," which failed recently, would have measured radiation at very large distances from the earth, and determined the existence of magnetic fields around the moon. The earth has a magnetic field around it, just like an ordinary bar magnet, which makes possible the use of the magnetic needle as a compass. The sun has such a magnetic field, as do many stars. The origin of these fields is not known for certain, but they probably arise from complicated motions of fluids in the cores of the rotating celestial bodies. It is not known whether the moon or the other planets have such magnetic fields. Straightforward experiments (by today's standards) can settle these questions, and help shed light on the general problem. Planetary probes will also bring back information about the atmospheres of the planets.

We may expect to learn very much about the solar system in the next few years, using relatively simple unmanned satellites and rocket probes. The big payoff, however, will follow the establishment of *manned* observatories either on satellites or the moon, because only then will we be able to observe the universe without interference by the atmosphere. At present our ability to observe directly from the earth is limited in two ways. First, because the atmosphere absorbs light of many wave lengths, particularly in the infrared and the ultraviolet regions of the spectrum. Thus objects which emit mostly light of these colors are not seen by us at all. Rocket probes have already brought back pictures of celestial objects which are hidden from us in this way. Without our atmospheric cover we would see them as the brightest objects in the night sky!

Second, the atmosphere is not uniform but has small irregular disturbances throughout which distort the image of the things we see through the atmosphere. This effect makes the stars seem to twinkle, and it also limits the useful size of telescopes. For this very reason the 200-inch reflecting telescope on Palomar is close to the maximum practical size. A *manned extra-terrestrial observatory* would be free of both of these

limitations. Seen from there, the universe may well look radically different.

We can see that astrophysics has most to gain from present and future satellites and space programs (though other fields will benefit also). This science is limited by the fact that experimentation is rarely possible and that it depends chiefly on observation. The radically new ways of observing afforded by the satellites are therefore likely to provide radically new insight here. The theories which will be tested, and confirmed or overthrown, will be the most basic ideas of astrophysics and physical cosmology: the theory of relativity, the laws of the formation, growth, and decay of stars and of galaxies, and of the whole universe itself. And this fact leads us to the last point, the effect of satellites on man's spirit, on his view of the universe and himself.

WE ARE ON the threshold of a new era in man's history, when the knowledge and control of the physical universe will reach new extremes. What attitudes, what ways of life will be relevant here? A few writers have grappled with the problem. C. S. Lewis' famous trilogy attempted a glance at this new world. The dichotomy Lewis strikes between the "good" medieval-type "Christian" and the power-mad (even possessed) scientist is a false one, and obscures the real problems. But C. S. Lewis is not completely alone. Professor Max Born, one of the esteemed pioneers of modern theoretical physics, a Nobel prize winner now in retirement, has denounced the race into space as

foolish and extravagant. Others have expressed doubts and misgivings.

But this censure will have little effect. Man will explore the universe as completely as he can, and travel as far as he can. Dr. Edward Teller said recently, while testifying before the Senate investigation of U. S. preparedness, that he wants to see the other side of the moon. In this short phrase he summed up the deep urge in the human soul to explore, and to extend its domain, an urge which has shaped human history from the beginning. Let us not be afraid of this urge, but rather let us take a lesson from the explorers of the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Their motives were complex and their ventures were condemned as well as ridiculed. But besides greed and desire for power they had a deep urge to discover the unknown and to learn the basic facts about the earth and its peoples. And they took along missionaries as well as artillery and mining equipment.

When Western man came to the New World he brought his own peculiar realm of good and evil. His enterprise brought conquest and rapine, the slave trade, political intrigues and power-struggles. Yet a great civilization grew up here which is now a symbol of freedom and liberty. Man is again extending into new worlds, and with him goes his potential for good and evil. If he has profited from his past experience, the good will far outweigh the evil, and men will formulate ethics and create institutions for the Space Age, rather than dismiss the whole challenge on a note of condemnation and ridicule.

Experiment in Monastic Life

*The Hindu ideal of poverty and simplicity is,
after all, also the ideal of Western monasticism*

by BEDE GRIFFITHS

AMONG THE HILLS which run down the length of Kerala from north to south there is a mountain called Kurisumala. It is a broad mass of granite rock, shaped "like the back of an elephant," with some trees and grass growing among the rocks, and on top of it stands a cross, which has given it its name: Kurisumala, the "hill of the cross." This cross was set up in the last century and has become a place of pilgrimage to which several thousand people come from all the surrounding country at cer-

tain times in the course of the year. It is on a hill just opposite this mountain that we were given a hundred acres of land on which to build a monastery. But it was only after we had come here that we discovered that this cross had been erected in honor of St. Benedict and that two medals of St. Benedict were buried beneath it. It looks, therefore, as though St. Benedict had chosen this spot for a monastery long before we came, and we take it as a good omen.

Certainly it would have been difficult for us to have found a better place. It is shut away among the hills with no access at present except for a rough track lead-

Dom Bede Griffiths, O.S.B., a monk of Prinknash Abbey, England, received special permission to undertake the work he here describes.

ing to a small tea-factory, though a new road is being built which will eventually put us in touch with Palai and Kottayam and the chief towns of Kerala. We are surrounded by hills on all sides; some of them have been planted with tea, but most of them are bare grassy hills which not long ago were the haunt of tigers, elephants and bison. Between us and Kurisumala there is a lovely valley running up to the east to a place called Kolahalamedu, which is a place of pilgrimage for Moslems; while to the west it opens on the plain of Kerala, and the sea. Generally this is hidden in mist, but there are times when in the afternoon the sun's rays light up the backwaters and we can catch a glimpse of the faint rim of the sea.

We arrived here on March 20, the eve of St. Benedict's day, expecting to find a hut ready to receive us. But the hut was not yet completed and we had to spend the first few days of our monastic life in the tea-factory. We have been living since that time in the hut. It is a hut made of bamboo and plaited palm leaves, which are used everywhere here for thatching, and have proved to our surprise to be a protection against even the heaviest rains. When we first came here we expected not to have to stay more than a month or two in the hut; but the stone building which was promised us in May has not yet been completed, and we have had to face the full fury of the monsoon in this fragile hut.

The monsoon here is something fearful. It comes at the beginning of June and lasts for three months, emptying about two hundred inches of rain in the course of that time. It is accompanied by terrific winds, which felt as though they would sweep the hut away, and did in fact lift the iron roof off our building in a violent gale one night. But the hut stood up to it.

WE HAVE COME to thank God, however, for experiences such as this. They have taught us the conditions under which the average peasant lives throughout India. It may be of interest to describe this life, so remote from any known conditions in Europe or America that I could never have imagined it. The floor of the hut, then, is of earth, which is covered with a coating of cow-dung. This was the universal custom even in quite respectable houses in India until recently. The cow-dung is used partly for sanitary reasons, as it keeps off all insects in a remarkable way, but also partly for religious motives. The cow is, of course, sacred throughout India and a Hindu housewife will religiously paint her floor with cow-dung each week, and often draw sacred patterns on it. The only disadvantage we found with this was that our floor was always damp, and we had to put down first some straw and then some boards to sit and sleep on, but normally the floor of a hut should be quite dry. In the hut we have practically no furniture, and

this again is normal in an Indian cottage. We sit and sleep on mats and take our meals squatting on the floor and eating with our hands. There are no knives, spoons or forks, and we eat from plain earthenware dishes which are sold in all the villages.

It is worth emphasizing that this way of life is still common not only among the poorer people, but even among the well-to-do in the country. Richer people may have tables and chairs and beds and spoons and forks, but the average Hindu is still quite willing to sit on the floor and sleep on a mat and eat with his hands. Christians on the whole tend to adopt Western customs, but for this very reason we think that it is important that monks should be prepared to adopt this humbler way of life. It is certainly not easy for a European at first, but it has the attraction of a beautiful simplicity. We also go barefoot as do most people from childhood on in India (it is one of those things which give so much natural grace to life in India), and we wear the saffron-colored habit of the Hindu sannyasi (monk).

In this way we are trying to identify ourselves not merely with the poor in India but also specifically with the tradition of the Hindu sannyasi. To the Hindu a man whose life is dedicated to God is necessarily a poor man, and there is no doubt that it shocks him to see our priests going about in shoes and hats and living like Europeans. For a monk, at least, it seems essential that he should keep to the poverty and simplicity of the Hindu ideal, which is after all the ideal of Western monasticism too. For this reason we are living on rice and curry and vegetables. It is an unfortunate fact that eating meat (like drinking and smoking) has come to be regarded as typical of a Christian, and especially of a priest, in India; whereas the strict Brahmin eats neither meat nor fish nor eggs, and the sannyasi is always expected to be content with his bowl of rice. We have found that, with plenty of milk, this makes a very good and balanced diet, and at the same time it is in accordance with the strict interpretation of our own Rule.

OUR LIFE IS based in all its essentials on the Rule of St. Benedict, but with one very important exception. Instead of following the Latin rite, we have obtained permission to use the Syro-Malankara rite, which is in use in this part of India. It is (or should be) well known that the Syrian rite has been in use in India from very early times. According to tradition it was brought here by St. Thomas the Apostle, and there is certainly no doubt that it has been in use since the early centuries of Christian history. The predominant form of the rite here is the Syro-Malabar or Chaldean rite, that is, the rite of Mesopotamia and Persia, from which places the Church in India was governed in the early centuries. But unfortunately this rite has been

very badly Latinized, though it is now in process of reform. For this reason we have adopted the Syro-Malankara rite, which is the rite of Antioch and is a pure Eastern rite without any contamination from the West.

This rite has been for us a real discovery. In the first place the *Kurbana*, or Offering, which is the name for the Mass, is perhaps the best example of a popular liturgy in the whole Church. It is translated into Malayalam, the language of Kerala, and adapted to the Syriac chant, and in this way it is sung in all the churches. The people—men, women and children—nearly all know the chants by heart, and the whole liturgy is a constant dialogue between priest and people, including even the Consecration, which is sung aloud (though in this case the words are preserved in Syriac). But it is not only this aspect of the liturgy which interests us. We have found the Divine Office a wonderful source of inspiration. It is something completely original, composed for the most part, not of Psalms as in the Latin office, but of free compositions of an astonishing poetic beauty. It is entirely Semitic in character, without any trace of influence from Latin or Greek. It must be remembered that Syriac is practically identical with the Aramaic spoken by Our Lord, and it is as though this liturgy had sprung from this original soil of the Gospel. Its background is wholly Biblical and it gives a perfect example of the Christian use of the Old Testament. Our “saints” are Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Daniel and Job and, not least, “our father Adam and our mother Eve,” whose names recur constantly in the liturgy.

We feel that this oriental liturgy with its Eastern modes of thought and expression and its Eastern chant (of great beauty though it is strange at first), which already has deep roots in India, is the best means which can be found of presenting the Gospel free of its “Western garb” of language and thought, which has been such a great obstacle to the spread of the faith in India. At the same time it is perfectly adapted to the monastic life. It enables us to make that return to the sources of Christian and monastic life, the Bible and the Liturgy, which is the most important movement in the Church today. In this way we shall simply be following St. Benedict’s own teaching, for it is well known that in the last chapter of the Rule he directs his monks to rely on just these sources for their rule of life.

But in this chapter he mentions not only the “inspired books of the Old and the New Testament,” but also the “teachings of the holy Fathers,” that is, the fathers of Eastern monasticism, especially those whose teaching is contained in the conferences of Cassian. It is here that we believe another great work is to be done. Monastic life must be renewed in its sources in

the East, if it is to penetrate into the life of the East. Here are to be found the genuine foundations of the ascetic and contemplative life, where Christian tradition comes nearest to the ascetic and mystical tradition of the East. It is worth mentioning that we have found especially in some of the Syrian fathers, like St. Isaac of Nineveh, the purest type of this Eastern monastic spirit, and we feel that there is a basis here for a monastic ideal which will be Syrian, that is, genuinely Eastern, not only in the form of its liturgy but in its spirituality as well.

BEHIND ALL these questions of the exterior and the interior form of the monastic life in India we have to keep constantly in mind our fundamental purpose: to establish a pure form of the contemplative life in India. Everyone feels that this is the one thing lacking as yet to the Church in India. It has its active orders of all sorts and a fine secular clergy, but it has yet only the bare beginnings of the contemplative life. Our own beginning is, in fact, very small and very humble, and we realize the great difficulties which lie in the way. Yet it is important, even at the beginning, that the goal should be clearly seen. There is in Hinduism a tradition of contemplation and the contemplative life going back to the very beginning of its history and informing the whole of its culture. This tradition is still a living power in India and it constitutes India’s great gift to the world. Yet up to now there has been practically no contact between this great spiritual tradition and the Church. At present, in fact, the Church is so far estranged from this inner life of the Indian people that it does not seem possible to make much contact directly. We have first to establish our own tradition of the monastic life and to deepen our own contemplation, until we become capable of a living dialogue with the Hindu tradition. Thus we hope that we may be preparing the way, in however small a degree, for that great awakening, when the Church will begin to enter into the inheritance of the East, and the East will begin to find the fulfillment of its history, of its life and thought and its search for God, in the living truth of Christ and His Church.



THE SCREEN

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

NO MATTER how one may feel about the frequently sensational emphasis on sex in Tennessee Williams' plays, one has to admit that Williams states well, perhaps better than any other living dramatist, the great problem of man's loneliness and inability to communicate with his fellow men. Again and again he stresses this theme, and in "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," the latest of his plays to be made into a movie, Williams presents his argument with stinging force. "We talk in circles and have nothing to say to each other," Brick replies to his father who is trying to learn why his son drinks so much. The characters have something to say all right—but they talk *around* the subject; and much of "Cat" is spent with one character misunderstanding and rowing with another. It is Brick versus his wife; Brick versus his father; the father versus the mother; Brick versus his brother; and the brother, rightfully resentful that hard-drinking Brick is the favorite son, versus the whole family.

In writing the movie script from Tennessee Williams' play, Richard Brooks cleaned up the language considerably and made several changes (dropping the suggestion of a homosexual relationship between Brick and his friend who committed suicide and adding a seemingly endless scene with Big Daddy writhing through cancer pains). "Cat" is still pretty strong stuff. Although it is rather talky for a movie, the dialogue is undeniably interesting and the story moving. Furthermore the fine cast gathered by Producer Lawrence Weingarten give superb performances that add much to the film's persuasiveness even when one isn't in sympathy with the characters.

Never before has Director Richard Brooks been so successful with an *entire* cast, a cast who respond to his effective staging of every scene. The role of Brick is an extremely difficult one, and it is made even more difficult in the movie because his hatred of his wife and his refusal to share her bed are almost without motivation. It is to Paul Newman's credit that he plays the role so convincingly. But Brick's drinking and the cold disdain with which he looks at Maggie are only a cover-up for his own guilt and immaturity. He knows very well that he and not Maggie is more responsible for his friend's suicide; and in his refusal to grow up he still revels in the glories of the football field, glories he once shared with his friend, the idol whose feet of clay Brick refused to see.

In his childishness Brick also refuses to listen to his wife's pleadings; and Elizabeth Taylor, looking radiantly beautiful and giving the best performance of her

career, makes those pleadings very effective indeed. But Miss Taylor knows exactly what she is doing as Maggie, nervous as a cat on a hot tin roof, determined to win her husband to bed, determined never to be poor again, determined that Brick will get his share of his father's estate in spite of all the conniving of his greedy brother. Although Jack Carson seems to caricature the brother role at first, he is extremely moving in the last part of the film, especially in the emotional final scenes; and Madeleine Sherwood is excellent as his nasty, scheming wife, the mother of five repulsive children, whom Maggie calls "the no-neck monsters."

Although the role of Big Daddy has been wisely toned down for the movie, Burl Ives, who played it on the stage, once again throws his weight around with lusty vigor. This domineering bully, who made his millions through hard work, expects everyone to kowtow; and everyone does—except Brick. Equally effective, although her role is considerably smaller, is Judith Anderson as Big Mama; perhaps her portrayal is too strong for a woman who has been pushed around by her bossy husband for years, but Miss Anderson is magnificent in her big scenes. Ives and Newman come through well in their big scene too—when they finally have it out, stop talking in circles and come to understanding and the beginning of love. It is the beginning of the end for Big Daddy, but for Brick it is the beginning of maturity; he will turn to his wife now for love. "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" has a great deal to say on many subjects, but it is mainly concerned with love and understanding; and its writing and acting are on an adult level.

ANOTHER FILM that has a lot to say about love and understanding and tolerance is Producer-director Stanley Kramer's "The Defiant Ones." For the past few years Kramer has been on a kick of big movies like "The Pride and the Passion." But now with "The Defiant Ones" he returns to his first love: movies that are unpretentious in size but big in content, like his "Home of the Brave," "The Men" and the memorable "High Noon." His new picture tells the story of two convicts who escape from a Southern chain gang. One is white, one black; and, although they hate each other, they are chained together by the wrist. They quarrel viciously, but soon realize, since they can't break the chain, that they need each other and must work together to accomplish their escape. Going through innumerable hardships, they slowly, very slowly, come to have a new regard for each other; and after their binding chain is broken they are bound together by friendship.

Although this story is rather contrived at times, the script by Nathan E. Douglas and Harold Jacob Smith is excellent and dares to say many of the things that need saying about racial tensions. Kramer's direction

is first-rate, and his cast work well with him throughout. Tony Curtis shows his ability to play mature roles as he portrays the white punk, a bigoted rebel who landed in prison because he wanted more than he could get legitimately. As the Negro, who is also a rebel, but with more reason in an unjust social scheme, Sidney Poitier gives a performance so powerful and moving that he becomes the main figure in the exciting plot. Among the pursuers Theodore Bikel is outstanding as the humane sheriff who makes it clear to the State Police Captain (Charles McGraw) and the civilian posse that the fugitives are men, not rabbits to be torn apart by the dogs.

While Kramer is to be commended for making a movie that speaks up so frankly for tolerance and understanding among men, it is unfortunate that the film's execution couldn't have matched its intention. The episodes are too weighted in favor of the points they try to establish; and some of the minor characters—those in the posse, some in the near-lynching scene, and Clara Williams as a sex-starved backwoodswoman who gets a yen for Tony Curtis—come close to being ridiculous. Only Poitier, as the Negro determined never to say “Yes, boss” again; Bikel, as the sheriff motivated by law and justice; and perhaps Lon Chaney, as an ex-convict—only these have enough dignity and depth to win respect and sympathy. “The Defiant Ones” aims at universality, but doesn't make the grade. It is, however, a movie for adults.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

COMMUNICATIONS

THE PRESIDENT AND SEGREGATION

Utica, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: In your issue of August 15th, in an editorial which discusses segregation [“Bad News From Arkansas”], there is the statement “There was a time when the segregation tide in Arkansas might have been turned by even a few words from the President . . .”, but the few words are not made known. Few or many, the words should be made known if they are of a kind which might have softened the age long bitterness of Arkansas towards their colored neighbors and prevented the exclusion of colored students from the Little Rock High School. The Little Rock incident is in the past but the segregation problem is still with us.

Frequently, in your “Week by Week” section, in the commentary on world issues fashioned for the most part by Russia, there is more than an intimation that some particular world problem might have been avoided if there had been a different Presidential approach. What the particular approach should have been, or in what way the Administration erred, is not made clear.

I realize, in any discussion of current events, that it is difficult for articles not to be colored by the political leanings of the writer or by prejudices by which judgment is swayed, but the problems which stem from the race issue and the Communist threat are so stupendous there should be a certain diffidence in the assessing of blame. So, at least, it would seem, but such diffidence, certainly, is wanting in the Arkansas segregation article referred to.

WARNICK J. KERNAN.

The President obviously cannot solve all problems, but he can often do a great deal if he exercises leadership. As far as his duties on the segregation-integration crisis are concerned, we agree with the resolution on the subject passed by the recent National Catholic Conference on Interracial Justice, a report on which appears on Pages 630 and 631.

THE EDITORS.

FIRE AT FRIENDSHIP HOUSE

Chicago, Ill.

TO THE EDITORS: The Commonweal and its friends, who have shown through the years a vital interest in the work of the Friendship House movement, will be sorry to hear of a recent fire which partially destroyed Friendship House in Chicago. The hundred-and-fifty foot, two-story building, which has for the past eleven years housed a huge variety of activities and programs for interracial justice, has been damaged badly by fire and water which was used to stop the blaze. Immediate repairs will be necessary to get it back to a usable state.

Friendship House has existed twenty years in the United States. Motivated by love of God, it has moved from crisis to crisis, battling against the evils of discrimination and trying to develop Christian consciences on the interracial issue. Because it has functioned on a shoestring budget gained completely through the donations of interested friends, it has often had to appeal for help to continue on a day to day basis. It is now in a new and particularly trying crisis.

At a time when racial tensions mount higher than perhaps ever before, not only in Little Rock but in Chicago and throughout the country, it would seem a shame to have its needed work crippled. Yet funds must be forthcoming almost immediately or this could happen.

Readers of The Commonweal once saved the New York Friendship House at a time when its loss would have meant tragedy to hundreds of families being relocated from its area. The staff of Friendship House has asked that I write, appealing for their charity again. Donations should be addressed to Friendship House, 4233 S. Indiana Ave., Chicago, Illinois.

BETTY SCHNEIDER.

Henry James as Traveler

THE ART OF TRAVEL. By Henry James. Edited by Morton Dauwen Zabel. Doubleday. \$5.50.

By ANNE FREMANTLE

WHAT A real pity that we are not Catholic; that that dazzling monument is not something more to us than a mere splendid show! What a different thing this visiting of churches would be for us, if we occasionally felt the prompting to fall on our knees. I begin to grow ashamed of this perpetual attitude of bald curiosity." Mr. Zabel quotes Henry James in his introduction, and gives a deep and nourishing appraisal of the motives that impelled James to travel: "it was as a traveling critic and observer preparing himself for a professional career in writing that he always felt himself obliged to justify his foreign sojourns and indulgences, both to his uneasy family back home and to his editors and readers in America."

But, alas, as the motto given this volume by its editor has it, those who run across the sea change skies but not souls. And the one piece of baggage no traveler can lose is himself: James thought of traveling "as it were, to go to the play, to attend a spectacle" and found it both heartless and unsuitable to step forth into the streets of a foreign town to feast upon novelty when that novelty consisted simply of the slightly different costumes in which hunger and labor presented themselves. Yet, though without religious or social commitment, James was not just a globetrotter: every discovery he made of "constituted beauty," every feast he indulged in upon the pictorial, every inhalation he made of the historic, was part of the store of impressions and backgrounds he squirreled away for use in his novels. His ideal was never to be a cosmopolite: "the ideal should be to be a concentrated patriot"; but if one were a cosmopolite by accident, then "one must make the best of it."

This James certainly did. He made the best of London's low black houses "like so many rows of coalscuttles and as inanimate," and ended by becoming a British subject; he made the best of France, though he never surrendered to a country so alien to the moralizing puritan he was. Above all, he made the best of Italy, where he felt himself a "passionate pilgrim" visiting constantly those "shrines for the reverential spirit," Venice, Florence and Rome. Yet he was always simultaneously conscious of the greater innocence, indeed the profounder purity, of the American—and, above all, of himself. His dislike of Zola's profounder appreciation of Paris is not a priggish one; he takes no "holier than thou" attitude; only a matter-of-fact consternation, that Zola's Paris, unlike Dante's Florence or Dicken's London, will remain untranslated and untranslatable for him. And Char- tres for him was above all, icy: his teeth chattered "a respectful negative" to the sacristan who offered to show him the crypt.

His condescension, his patronising air, are woefully dated: he mustn't, he says, talk of "mouldy alleys," nor yet of "azure distances," as if they formed the main appeal to taste in "this accomplished little city" of Perugia; he complains that the defect of Stendhal is that he is never pictorial, yet he himself rarely uses the visual word, nearly always the evocative. For example the sea at Newport has "the desolate look of the ocean when the day ceases to care for it"; a sudden horror of Piccadilly overcomes him as he stares at his fire "like a tiger pounce of home-sickness which had been watching its moment."

He is, actually, at his best visiting or revisiting America, as he acknowledges: "one's supreme relation as one has always put it was one's relation to one's country." He delicately underlines the difference between Newport and Saratoga: "At Newport life is public, if you will; at Saratoga it is common."



"Necessary reading for those who would understand how complex the deep South problem is."

—RALPH MCGILL, Editor,
Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Stride Toward Freedom



THE MONTGOMERY STORY

By MARTIN LUTHER KING, Jr.

With great humility, Dr. King tells his inspiring, often amazing story—how he led his people to victory in their non-violent resistance to segregation.

"Dr. King has done a public service by graphically presenting the heroic Montgomery story and a still greater service by his balanced analysis of its philosophy. His book should bring light to countless minds still confused as to issues and procedures."—JOHN LaFARGE, S.J.

With 8 pages of photographs. \$2.95

The first biography of
the famous author of
MYSTICISM and WORSHIP



The Life of Evelyn Underhill

By MARGARET CROPPER

The moving story of one of the most influential women in the field of religion in our time. The book includes a selection of letters between Evelyn Underhill and Baron von Hugel, her spiritual director. "A warmly human biography of one of our age's few indisputably authentic guides to the devotional life."—CHAD WALSH.

Illustrated. \$3.75

At your bookseller

HARPER & BROTHERS, N. Y. 16

SEPTEMBER 26, 1958

639

And he dubs the American lakes a "breathing space in the large monotony."

Americans, go home! has become, alas, today as universal a message as *Kilroy was here* was a decade or so ago. Both phrases are but part of a large vocabulary of history that is post-James.

It is idle to blame James for failing to see or feel as we, jaundiced by two subsequent world wars, feel and see. But two of his closest competitors, style-wise John Ruskin and Vernon Lee, both had some wind of prophecy to buoy their verbal sails: James is becalmed in his appreciative descriptions—and his reader with him.

American Récit

THE BYSTANDER. By Albert J. Guerard. Atlantic-Little, Brown. \$3.75.

By GERALD WEALES

THE NARRATOR-HERO of Albert Guerard's *The Bystander* is, as he keeps saying, a fool. His foolishness is that of adolescence, but since he is a thirty-five-year-old professional failure, an American hack writer abroad, it sets on him unattractively. The story that he insists on telling—in repetitive detail—is the account of a brief, almost idyllic love affair with Christiane Mondor, an ex-actress, whom he has loved, after his schoolboy fashion, since he first saw her wearing a white tennis dress and eating a candied peach, eighteen years before the actual events of the novel. The other woman is a vicious teenage tease, the maid in the filthy hotel that Anthony (called Antony after his years in France) inhabits before and after his interlude at Cap Ferrat. Self-pityingly, Anthony describes himself as a man who has selected squalor, having lost one by one his youthful dreams; the last of them, which has centered on Christiane, that of a complete and totally encompassing love, seems momentarily possible. The novel is the hero's record of how his boy's dream of Christiane destroys his

immediate and incomplete possession of her and sends him screaming to the happy humiliation of life with Simone.

It is Mr. Guerard's intention that Anthony should be not only the leading actor in his little drama of love lost, but also the chief spectator, the bystander who sees himself in action. The chief difficulty with the method (that of the French *récit*, says Guerard on the book jacket, citing longingly Radiguet, Colette, Gide, Camus) is that Anthony the narrator is as foolish as Anthony the lover. He returns with disconcerting frequency to the same phrases, he evokes too familiar scenes; how often, for instance we have to see Christiane in terms of her clothes. The man who clings so insistently to the surface of his relationship, who carries still the yellowing postcard of the young actress, who clutches his idyll until it shatters in his hands and cuts him badly is also supposed to be aware that he is actually behaving as he does only so that he can lose Christiane, so that he can return to dirt and failure and frustration with Simone. It is a supposition that could only be acceptable if Anthony and his narrative were compelling, if he and his two loves were convincing.

Although the novel is obviously the product of a man who knows precisely what he is trying to do, both it and the characters who move through it fail to be credible. Christiane is the standard woman of the world passing hesitantly into middle age and Simone—with her clutching hands, her tight little breasts, her snaking body—is almost a burlesque. If the novel is hard to believe, it is even harder to care about. Only one scene—the one in which Anthony wins and loses a great amount of money at the roulette wheel—conjures up any excitement, and memories of numberless Riviera movies can testify that the gambling sequence is always a sure thing. At one point in the novel, when Anthony has been importuning too insistently, Christiane says of the man who keeps her. "If André loved me deeply and passionately and had to talk about

it all the time—yes, then I think I would leave him." Through most of *The Bystander*, I shared Christiane's instinct to run away.

Delight in Words

OUNCE, DICE, TRICE. By Alastair Reid. Drawings by Ben Shahn. Little, Brown. \$3.50.

By JOHN P. SISK

ALASTAIR REID is a Scotchman living in Spain whom readers of the *New Yorker* know as a fine lyric poet. When his collection of poems, *To Lighten My House*, appeared in this country a few years ago Howard Nemerov spoke of his "delicate and *rafiné* recklessness of speech," and Selden Rodman of his ability "to keep alive the child's discovery of the world as a series of mysteries." Both comments suggest the personality capable of such an original and delightful book as *Ounce, Dice, Trice*. It is "an odd collection of words and names, to amuse and amaze you." It is also, as are few books written for young people, a book to amuse and amaze the whole family.

Since *Ounce, Dice, Trice* is a poet's rather than a philologist's introduction to language, it may strike one at first as an exuberant but rather disordered collection of odds and ends. Actually, it is a sampler, the organizing principle of which is simply a delight in words. You take it from there. Like all good children's books (or all good books) it opens a door. In it you will find curiosities: words that read the same both ways and words that turn into mystery words when reversed; practicalities: names for fingers ("Long Lauder" for the middle finger), nitwits ("Slammerkin"), twins ("Crinkum" and "Crankum" for squirrels), houses ("Windygates"), insects ("Legliddy") and whales ("Chumley"); definitions: "A 'poose' is a drop which stays on the end of the nose and glistens," and "'quicklings' are young insects which in summer dance in the air in clouds and catch the light"; words for moods: "buga-

boo" and "bugseed" if you are grumpy, "willow" and "spinnaker" if you feel like singing, "blunderbuss" and "mugwump" if you are gloomy; words for the time of day: "daypeep" through "dimity" to "owlcry"; words to count with: "ounce, dice, trice, quartz, quince, sago, serpent, oxygen, nitrogen, denim."

This is all good fun, and for adults it will be nostalgic, reminding them of pig Latin and early experiments with metathesis and reversed words, of the strange music of inflection and consonance in foreign languages, and of the intriguing anarchy of Latin radical changing verbs—of that earlier time before the sounds of words had become inseparable from their meanings, before language had ceased to be the playground that it always is for all those, poets and lovers of poetry alike, who inhabit the *dichtung* side of Max Eastman's ferryboat.

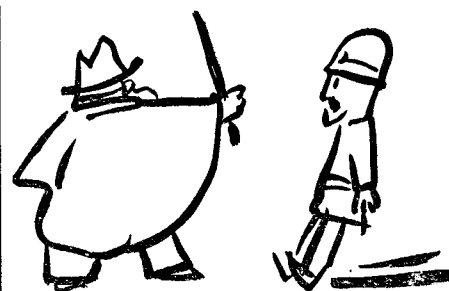
Indeed, such a book can be a useful introduction not only to poetry generally but to the poetry that the average reader finds most

bewildering, since it can awake, or reawake, the necessary delighted attention to words. I would suggest it as a warm-up exercise for Hopkins, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, or e. e. cummings, or to help understand what Sherwood Anderson said about Gertrude Stein (he might have said it about Milton or Keats): "She is laying word against word, relating sound to sound, feeling for the taste, the smell, the rhythm of the individual word."

And Mr. Reid's book can also help us understand that the conflict between the poet and the world is in great part a conflict of opposed attitudes towards language. "Ploo' is breaking your shoelace," and a mess of written-on papers is a "scribbitch of papers," says Mr. Reid, thereby outraging the practical go-getters who have no time to realize that the spirit of play, which they relegate to children, can exist with that passion for precise naming without which language deteriorates, even for uses in the marketplace.

I have one quarrel with Mr. Reid. In his introduction, and here and there in his book, he tends to take a non-contextual attitude towards words, as though something of the first importance can be learned about them when they are taken singly. We all do this; it is as hard not to as to be livingly aware that the Ptolemaic system is wrong. Mr. Reid says, for instance, that "ariel," "willow," "spinnaker," "whirr," "lissom," "sibilant," "petticoat," "nimble," and "nib" are light words. But (and as a practicing poet he surely knows this) they are only light words in contexts that lighten them. Arranged and labeled on a page of his book, and clarified by Ben Shahn's splendid illustrations, they are in such a context, but of no one of them could it be said absolutely that it is a light word. The "willow" of Desdemona's swan song is hardly a light word.

In the strictest sense, words only "mean" in contexts, and any attempt to isolate one from a given context only puts it in another. Thus individual words grouped together for purposes of illustration or classification modify each other and become subordinated to the sound



LUNACY and LETTERS

by G. K. Chesterton

If you read Chesterton's weekly column in the *London Daily News* between 1901 and 1911 you may remember some of these essays—*The Meaning of the Theatre*, *The Orthodoxy of Hamlet*, *Good Stories Spoilt by Great Authors*, *A Defense of Bores*, *On Keeping a Dog*—but except for such rare and ancient readers of the London press, all is new. None of these thirty-eight essays chosen by Dorothy Collins for their lasting interest and entertainment value has appeared in book form. \$3.00

GIBBON and ROME

by E. J. Oliver

A biography of the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*—a much abused book, but still a classic and still read. What gives it such vitality, Mr. Oliver believes is that in spite of his pose of chilly, Olympian detachment (so unsuited to his face and figure) Gibbon had one great passion, Rome. He was writing his love story and his whole heart went into it. If you never read a line of Gibbon, be warned—after reading Mr. Oliver's book you are likely to want to. \$3.50

A RETREAT for PRIESTS

by Msgr. Ronald Knox

A Reprint. "Any priest who fails to read this book is missing out on a great experience. To the educated laity it can also be recommended without reserve."—*The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*. \$3.00

Order from any bookstore

There is more about these books in Sheed & Ward's OWN TRUMPET. To get it, free and postpaid, write to Lucy MacGill at—

SHEED & WARD New York 3

Christmas Cards

FULL COLOR CIRCULAR FREE
Berliner & McGinnis
 Nevada City, California

RUSSELL KIRK
 Author of *The Conservative Mind*
 is now editing **MODERN AGE:**
A CONSERVATIVE REVIEW
 Quarterly—\$3.00 a year
 "Speaks out forthrightly"—*London Times*
FREE COPY ON REQUEST
 Write Foundation for Foreign Affairs, Inc.
 64 E. Jackson Blvd., Chicago 4, Ill.

Janssen wants to see you!
FAVORITE DINING LANDMARK of N.Y.
 Since 1898

 German American Specialties
Janssen's
 Lexington Ave. at 44 St.
 Open Daily. Lunch & Dinner Sundays, 4 p.m.
 LE 2-5661

pattern they make, which is why a schoolboy memorizing a Latin declension tends to lose the syntactical function of the separate words in the tune of the paradigm. Hear the same thing happen in Reid's list of "bugwords": "humbug," "bugbear," "bugaboo," "bugbane," "ladybug," "bogybug," "bugseed." Speak this list aloud and the semantic relation to "bug" tends to be overridden by an intriguing verbal ditty based on the sound of "bug" with variations. In fact, it is because Mr. Reid does things like this so well, because he and Mr. Shahn have made such delightful contexts with their words, that I like this book.

Cloak and Dagger

THE DEVIL'S AGENT. By Hans Habe. Frederick Fell, Inc. \$4.50.

By WILLIAM J. SMITH

MR. HANS HABE, whose real name is Jean Bekassy, is a Hungarian - Austrian - German - French - American who now makes his home in Austria, writes in German, and has had a number of his novels and reportorial works translated into English—and no doubt

into other languages as well. The only one of his previous novels to have attracted a great deal of attention here is his recent *Off Limits*, a story of occupied Germany.

Mr. Habe's cosmopolitan background comes in handy in the present novel, which is the memoir of George Droste, a Viennese gentleman—perhaps one should say scoundrel—of middle years, who looks back over his brilliant career as an espionage agent, working simultaneously for the U.S. and the Soviet Union, and sometimes for interested third or fourth parties as well. The book is fascinating on this score, as an account of the dangerous and brutal and fascinatingly clever world of Intelligence. Mr. Habe would have it that the word Intelligence is an ironically inappropriate one and that the Secret Service organizations of the world are chiefly notable for precisely their lack of that quality—intelligence.

Be that as it may (and one sometimes suspects that Mr. Habe's spies owe more to a Graustarkian imagination than to the world of fact) the novel is a lively and exciting one, replete with secret panels and hidden microphones and knockout drops and little old ladies who turn out to be master spies, and midnight escapes under barbed wire, and

secret archives smuggled in coffins, and amorous ladies and atomic scientists, and all the paraphernalia. Mr. Habe makes great fun of all this, declaring, one suspects with considerable truth, that most spies could accomplish far more by a careful reading of a good newspaper than by all the cloak-and-dagger shenanigans in the book.

It is, in fact, Mr. Habe's thesis that the Intelligence services are cliquish little groups engaged chiefly in stunts designed to extract more money from the legislatures of their respective countries, and in a preposterous sort of intramural rivalry with one another in a realm that has little or nothing to do with any world of economic or political or military fact. Again he makes a good case. The novel is a series of droll illustrations of the hero's cynical nose-thumbing escapades at the expense of his various sinister masters. It is pure Rogue Literature, despite a tenuous vein of True Love and a few other novelistic devices. The cynico-solemn lectures add up only to advice to stay out of the Secret Service, and, alas, Mr. Habe makes it seem like such a splendidly exciting and financially remunerating and essentially safe world that he may well end up making more proselytes than otherwise. Even George Droste's demise, though violent, is prettily romantic. It's a wonderful book, with just enough of the seeming-serious to make you feel you're not wasting your time and simply having fun with a spy story. And if it is "just a spy story" it's a very good one indeed.

YOUR BRAINS AND OUR BOOKS

A combination that's hard to beat*

May we break some advertising rules in this space and simply tell you about the Thomas More Book Club and why it is very likely that you would both enjoy and profit from a membership in it.

As a reader of *Commonweal* you are evidently a person who likes some substance to his reading. The Thomas More Book Club consistently selects books of substance. They are books for the mature Catholic reader who demands much from his reading time, and his book buying dollar. *Painting and Reality* by Etienne Gilson, *The World of Evelyn Waugh* edited by Charles Rolo, *Reflections on America* by Jacques Maritain, *The Catholic Church in the Modern World* by E. E. Y. Hales, *The Temptations of Christ* by Father Gerald Vann, *The Autobiography of St. Therese of Lisieux* in the new translation by Magr. Ronald Knox, *Thoughts in Solitude* by Thomas Merton—all have been recent selections typical of both the scope and quality of Thomas More Book Club selections.

In addition to being regularly informed (via a reliable big monthly newsletter) of the best new books, quantity buying enables you to save from 25% to 40% on each selection you choose. Generally two selections are offered each month. We ask only that you take four selections at the special prices during each year that you wish to remain a member. That's all there is to it—the best books available, maximum savings, no gimmicks, you may cancel at any time.

And, while it's really not playing the game, we won't ask you to print your name in an impossibly small coupon or to mutilate this issue. To begin your membership simply write "start membership" on a card or letter with your name and address and send it to Department C (for *Commonweal*, obviously):

THE THOMAS MORE BOOK CLUB, 210 W. Madison St., Chicago 6, Ill.

*surpass

REVIEWERS

Anne Fremantle is a well-known critic, lecturer and writer. Her latest publication is a novel, *By Grace of Love*.

Gerald Weales, a member of the faculty at the University of Pennsylvania, contributes frequently to *The Commonweal*, the *Reporter* and other magazines.

John P. Sisk, a regular contributor, is a member of the English department at Gonzaga University, Spokane, Washington.

William James Smith is an editor of the *Atomic Industrial Forum*, a magazine devoted to the industrial uses of atomic energy.